



CHARADRIUS XANTHOCHEILUS: Wagl.

CHARADRIUS XANTHOCHEILUS, *Wagl.*

Australian Golden Plover.

Charadrius xanthocheilus, Wagl. Syst. Av. *Charadrius*, sp. 36.—Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. ii. pl. 85.

THIS species of Golden Plover, which I have referred to the *Charadrius xanthocheilus* of Wagler, although nowhere very abundant, is generally dispersed over all the colonies from Van Diemen's Land to the extreme north of the continent of Australia, and I saw a specimen in the Museum at Sydney which had been procured on Melville Island; its range therefore is very extensive. I obtained several specimens on the banks of the Derwent in Van Diemen's Land, observed it in small numbers on the flats below Clarence Plains, and also killed examples on one of the islands opposite Flinders' Island.

Its habits, manners, and general economy so closely resemble those of the Golden Plover (*Charadrius pluvialis*) of Europe, that a description of one is equally characteristic of the other. Like that bird, it frequents open plains in the neighbourhood of marshy lands or the sea-beach, runs with amazing facility, and flies with equal rapidity.

Indications of the future black colouring of the breast or breeding plumage begin to appear early in the spring, and as the season advances, every variety of colouring occurs from the mottled yellow of winter to the uniform black under-surface of summer, which latter state however is but seldom seen; whence I am induced to doubt its remaining to breed in any of the southern parts of Australia.

The full summer plumage is as follows:—The whole of the upper surface and tail very dark brown, each feather with a series of oblong yellowish and whitish spots along their margins; primaries dark brown with white shafts; lores, sides of the face, breast and all the under surface jet-black, bounded by a broad mark of white, which crosses the forehead, passes over the eye, down the side of the neck and along the flanks, where it becomes broad and conspicuous; under wing-coverts and the lengthened feathers covering the insertion of the wing uniform pale silvery brown; irides dark brown; bill dark olive; legs and feet leaden-grey.

In the winter season the black and white markings of the under surface entirely disappear, and are replaced by a buffy tint mottled with brown, the mottled appearance being produced by a triangular spot of pale brown at the tip of each feather.

The Plate represents the bird in the summer and winter plumage, and of the natural size.